

St Marks Christian Centre

St. Marks Church, St. Marks Road, CHESTER, Cheshire, CH4 8DE

Inspection date	07/05/2014
Previous inspection date	07/11/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	4
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably because staff have participated in training and attended regular meetings to increase their knowledge and skills. Consequently, children are making better progress.
- Children's safety is assured due to the positive measures taken to make sure the premises are safe and secure. This contributes to safeguarding children.
- Children's independent skills are developing well because staff involve them more in daily tasks. This helps children to become ready for school.
- Communication with parents is effective, which supports continuity in the children's care and learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to build on the monitoring of staff performance, in order to further expand their teaching skills and help them to achieve exemplary practice so that children's attainment is raised to the highest level.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the hall and the outdoor play area.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with children, staff and parents and a held meeting with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and sampled a range of other documentation, including the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Jan Linsdell

Full report

Information about the setting

St. Marks Christian Centre was registered in 1974 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The playgroup is run by a committee of parents and the day to day running is the responsibility of the manager. It operates from St Marks Christian Centre in Chester. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The playgroup employs eight members of childcare staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, including three at level 2 and three at level 3. The nursery opens Tuesday to Thursday, term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 18 children attending who are in the early years age group. The playgroup supports children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- build on the systems for performance management, for instance, by fully embedding peer observations, in order to continually support and enrich staff's teaching skills.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has significantly improved. This is largely due the training that staff have embraced, which has helped to improve their knowledge and skills. The learning environment is more stimulating, staff are more involved with the children and they meet their needs well. Consequently, children are more engaged and challenged in their play and they are working comfortably within the typical range of development expected for their age. Staff have introduced a detailed questionnaire for parents to complete about the children's abilities on entry. They use this in conjunction with their own observations to establish children's starting points in learning. The process of observation and assessment has also improved and staff use this information more effectively to plan relevant activities for the children. As a result, children make very good progress.

Taking into account the challenges of being a 'pack away' setting, staff organise the environment well to support children's learning. They make sure that the wide variety of resources and activities on offer promote all areas of learning, both indoors and outside. Children arrive happy and quickly involve themselves in play and exploration. Staff sit on the floor and interact purposefully with the children, for instance, when playing with the farm. They develop children's awareness of number and shape when they peel and cut

bananas. The daily routine is suitably balanced and enables children to enjoy activities, for example, free play, listening to stories in small groups and taking part in large group activities, such as dancing to music. New planting containers have been added to the garden, which provide good opportunities for children to dig in the soil and learn about growing.

Staff help children to become ready for school, for instance, by encouraging their social skills and helping them to learn about boundaries. They have increased opportunities for children to recognise their name and to make marks in different areas, for example, by providing writing materials in the outdoor construction area. This promotes children's communication and literacy skills. Staff involve parents in children's learning and provide them with end of term written summaries of their child's progress. They share the words of favourite nursery rhymes, so that parents of children with English as an additional language can sing these at home with their children. Parents of these children say they are 'very pleased' with their child's progress in speaking English, which in turn is helping the family to learn to speak English at home.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Settling-in procedures are flexible and take into account children's individual needs because staff gather good information from parents about their child's needs. This helps to ease children's move from home to playgroup and contributes to helping children feel emotionally secure. Discussions with key persons indicate that they know their children well, as they speak confidently about their abilities, interests and preferences. Relationships between staff and children are warm and friendly and some children hug their key person before they leave. Parents know who their child's key person is and they talk positively about staff's 'good quality interactions', which have 'increased children's confidence greatly'.

Staff support children to develop a healthy lifestyle. For example, children benefit from exercising in the spacious garden on a daily basis, which promotes their physical health and well-being. They learn to understand why good hygiene is important. This is because staff show children how to wash their hands properly, as they talk to them about germs and why they make us feel ill. Jugs of water and cups are accessible, so that children can help themselves to a drink when they need one. Staff make better use of snack time routines to promote children's independence and self-care skills. For instance, children are more involved in helping to set tables, serve food and pour their own drinks.

Children learn to understand and manage risks, for example, when they build with the large wooden blocks. All staff have attended behaviour management training, which has helped to establish a more consistent approach in managing challenging behaviour. For instance, staff give children choices, explain the consequences of their actions and support children to deal with their emotions. This helps children to learn and accept boundaries and their behaviour is good. Children respond positively to staff requests and they develop friendships with one another.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years

provision

The manager demonstrates a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and as a result, legal requirements are met. All staff have completed training in child protection. They are confident in explaining the whistle blowing procedures and they know where to access relevant contact numbers for reporting any concerns about children or adults. All staff, students and committee members have completed necessary vetting checks, which helps to ensure they are suitable for their role. Since the last inspection and subsequent monitoring visit, children's safety has much improved. For example, staff are well deployed to supervise the children. Staff's personal belongings are stored safely in the cupboard and new alarms have been fitted to internal doors. Daily safety checks are carried out help to ensure the premises are safe and secure.

The team are supportive of each other and show a commitment to raising standards in the playgroup. They have attended many meetings in their own time and received training from the local authority, which has helped to improve their teaching skills. Qualification levels are improving, with some staff undertaking formal training. Staff have made good use of self-evaluation, using feedback from parents and children to reflect on practice, identify strengths and devise action plans to support continuous improvement. This is leading to better learning experiences for the children and they are more motivated in their play. The manager has started to introduce peer observations to complement staff supervision and to develop practice even further. However, these are not yet fully embedded, so that staff are continually supported to raise the quality of their teaching skills and children's attainment is raised to the highest level.

Partnership with parents is developing well and staff are considering ways to extend parental involvement and support children's learning at home. Information is exchanged on a daily basis and staff are in the process of introducing family photograph books to help children settle in. Parents express their satisfaction with the playgroup and they comment about seeing improvements in the setting. They talk about having 'good communication' with the staff and they appreciate the online information made available to them. The manager is fully aware of the importance of liaising with other professionals to support children's care and learning and if necessary, to secure appropriate intervention.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	305325
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	963126
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	18
Name of provider	St Marks Under 5's Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	07/11/2013
Telephone number	01244 675372

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
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